



HR1187

LRB096 22180 KXB 40915 r

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HOUSE RESOLUTION

2 WHEREAS, The members of the Illinois House of
3 Representatives are pleased to congratulate the congregation
4 and pastor of First Baptist Church of Melrose Park on the
5 occasion of the 93rd anniversary of the church; and

6 WHEREAS, The first meeting of the First Baptist Church of
7 Melrose Park was held at 110 North 22nd Avenue in Melrose Park;
8 Reverend William Baldwin presided and later served as founding
9 pastor; the Church adopted the name The First Colored Baptist
10 Church of Melrose Park; and

11 WHEREAS, During the pastorate of the late Reverend W.
12 Thomas, the church purchased property in 1920 to build a new
13 church building; this effort was eventually discontinued; the
14 name was changed to First Baptist Church of Melrose Park on
15 November 22, 1922 during the pastorate of Rev. G.B. Donaldson;
16 and

17 WHEREAS, Reverend B.S.J. Ford became the 6th pastor of
18 First Baptist Church in 1932; under Pastor Ford, First Baptist
19 built its first church building in 1945; due to the Church's
20 income at the time, as well as banking practices during the
21 1940s, First Baptist was allowed to build a house without
22 interior walls or a basement for use as its church building; a

1 foyer area and basement were later added; and

2 WHEREAS, The Church has had eight locations to the present
3 date; Reverend Harry McNelty served as Assistant Pastor to
4 Pastor Ford for six months and became the 7th pastor of First
5 Baptist on September 18, 1959; under Pastor McNelty's
6 leadership, First Baptist Church achieved much of its progress;
7 a new edifice was built at 2114 Main Street in 1966, new
8 auxiliaries and groups were instituted to meet the needs of the
9 congregation, an addition to the new church was completed in
10 1978, a new bus and van were purchased, and property around the
11 Church was purchased; and

12 WHEREAS, A preschool and school, named after Pastor
13 McNelty, were founded in 1985 and the physical plant was
14 constructed in 1990, with an addition completed in 2001; and

15 WHEREAS, Reverend John L. Belser became the 8th Pastor of
16 First Baptist on April 5, 2002; under his leadership, First
17 Baptist has restructured ministries to address membership and
18 community needs, began radio and television broadcasts,
19 instituted children's church and enhanced youth ministry,
20 launched an Internet website and enjoyed tremendous growth
21 spiritually, numerically, and financially; plans are currently
22 underway for the relocation of First Baptist Church to larger
23 facilities; therefore, be it

1 RESOLVED, BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
2 NINETY-SIXTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS, that we
3 congratulate the congregation and Pastor Belser on the 93rd
4 anniversary of First Baptist Church of Melrose Park; and be it
5 further

6 RESOLVED, That a suitable copy of this resolution be
7 presented to Reverend Belser and the congregation of First
8 Baptist Church of Melrose Park as a symbol of our respect and
9 esteem.